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NOTES

THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC SERVICE

Our women seem to have contributed little, if anything at all, of scientific worth to the solution of that economic problem in the solution of which they may be supposed to be most directly interested. To them, certainly, the problem of domestic service is much more than an academic one. It is true that women have done a good deal of writing upon this subject, but their writing has consisted mainly of bitter complaining. And in so far as men have participated in the discussion, they have been too often writers for our popular Sunday supplements. Professor Lucy Salmon has stated that ¹ "we [i. e., Americans] believe it worthy of scientific investigation much more than the Europeans;" yet the treatment of the problem by American writers is less serious and less scientific than that given it by European writers. In fact, careful inquiry among students of economic conditions has failed to disclose the slightest interest in the problem, as if it actually were beneath the dignity of economic study and investigation. An exception must certainly be made in the case of the work of Miss Lucy Salmon, quoted above, many parts of which, primarily dealing with the historical aspects of the problem in the United States, are excellent. But in the efforts to advance a plan for the solution of this problem the author has signally failed. Profit-sharing, which was the essence of this plan, probably presented itself to Miss Salmon because of the many similar experiments in the industrial field in the end of the last century. And though the plan has reappeared, without any changes, four years later, in the second edition of the book, meanwhile profit-sharing has lost its popularity with economists even in the industrial field. And it hardly ever was seriously tried in the domestic field, for the sufficient reason, if for no other, that where there were no profits, they could not very well be shared.

The main cause of this fruitlessness of discussion seems to the writer to have been a wrong point of view. The discussion has largely centered around the *servant-girl problem*, and it seems to have been forgotten that there was also a *servant girl's problem*. What most of the students of the subject tried to discover was "how

¹ Lucy Salmon. *Domestic Service*, p. 302.

to get satisfactory domestic help," and the larger question, "What are the conditions of life and labor of the enormous army of domestic employees?" was quite unconsciously neglected. In fact, few economists have even any conception how large this army is. The Census reports will readily supply the necessary and interesting information, and will show what an important economic problem the problem of domestic service is.

SERVANTS AND WAITERS *

	Men	Women	Total
1870	125,434	873,738	999,172
1880	183,093	960,975	1,153,068
1890	238,152	1,216,639	1,454,791
1900	276,958	1,283,763	1,560,721

* Data for 1890 and 1900 taken from the comparative table of the four last censuses (Table IV, page 1, Volume "Occupations," *Twelfth Census*). In that table "servants and waiters" for 1880 and 1870 are stated together with "housekeepers and stewards;" the necessary data have therefore been obtained from the original reports of 1870 and 1880; though housekeepers, etc., were largely included with servants in these early years.

In the above table the servants as well as waiters are included, though their economic and social position is vastly different. In our further analysis we shall be forced to take this class as a whole, as the detailed statistics are unfortunately given for both groups together. Yet the difference in the numerical growth of the two groups is significant:

	Servants	Waiters	Total
1870	975,734	23,438	999,172
1900	1,453,677	107,044	1,560,721
Growth for thirty years. . . .	49 %	356.7 %	56.2 %

In thirty years the number of servants has hardly increased 50 per cent., while the number of waiters has been increased more than four and a half times. The main cause of this is the development of hotel and restaurant life. But that is not the only cause. Another is the general dislike for the servant's trade. This dislike will appear still better when the growth of the servant class is compared with the growth of the number of all persons in gainful occupations and the total population of the country.

	1870	1900	Per cent. of Growth
Population.....	38,558,371	75,994,575	95.0
Families.....	7,579,363	16,239,797	114.0
Persons in gainful occupations..	12,505,923	29,073,233	132.5
Servants.....	975,734	1,453,677	49.0

The number of servants has increased only half the rate of the increase of the population, and scarcely more than a third of the increase of the number gainfully employed. While in 1870 domestic servants constituted 7.8 per cent. of all such persons, in 1900 they were reduced to 5 per cent.

From one point of view, therefore, the problem of domestic service is being gradually and slowly solved—by the working-men and women refusing to render such service. But it is this very effort at solution of the problem that makes it more acute on the demand side. With the phenomenal increase of wealth, and an increase in number of families from 7,580,00 in 1870 to 16,240,000 in 1900, among which the proportion of wealthy families requiring domestic service is also an increasing one, the demand for servants has risen greatly, at the same time that the supply has fallen off. Since the demand for domestics is extremely inelastic, this dislocation of the equilibrium has been in itself sufficient cause of the “servant girl problem.”

This lack of correspondence between supply and demand, and the abhorrence of our working-people for the position of domestic servant, becomes still more pronounced when the statistics of women only is taken. Women constitute the majority of the servant class, and, as we shall presently point out, it is only by them that a claim to really productive activity can be made. Even if modern political economy has substituted the new conception of services for the old concept of goods, it still requires the qualification of utility, and social utility at that, to make a service of economic worth. Mere servility is not sufficient to make a service economic—and mere servility is that for which primarily the man servant is paid. Washing clothes and preparing food is productive work when performed in the kitchen no less than when done in the laundry or the restaurant; but most of the functions of the man servant, since they are performed for the sole reason of emphasizing the higher social position of the master, are not economic work, and the problem of the man servant is, therefore, rather a social than an economic one. Besides, the

number of male servants is comparatively small, and proportionately more men than women are waiters:

1900*

	Male	Per cent.	Female	Per cent.
Servants.....	215,818	77	1,242,192	96.7
Waiters.....	64,591	23	42,839	3.3
Total.....	280,409	100	1,285,031	100.0

* The data include Alaska and Hawaii, and therefore differ somewhat from the data of the preceding tables.

If it be but remembered that the number of millionaires in this country is estimated at four or five thousand, it will be seen that the two hundred and odd thousand male servants are just sufficient to meet the demand of the millionaires and the much more numerous class of people whose wealth must be expressed in hundreds of thousands; in short, that the male servant is scarcely met with in those households where the servant is an active productive worker.

For the working-woman—specially created, as our fathers and mothers would have us believe, for household duties—domestic service has always been one of the important fields of wage work.

Year	TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYED	SERVANTS AND WAITRESSES	
		Number	Per cent.
1870.....	1,836,288	873,738	47.58
1880*.....	2,647,157	969,975	36.64
1890.....	4,005,532	1,216,639	30.37
1900.....	5,319,397	1,283,763	24.13

* The total number of employed in 1890 is taken from Table XVI (p. lxxviii, "Occupations," *Twelfth Census*), as corrected by the author of the later report, and differs from the total given in the original reports of the Eleventh Census.

The same tendency may be more forcibly shown in the following statement:

	Increase in Total No. of Women Employed	Per cent.	Increase in No. of Servants	Per cent.
1870-1880.....	810,869	44.2	96,237	11.0
1880-1890.....	1,358,375	51.3	246,664	25.4
1890-1900.....	1,313,865	32.8	67,124	5.5
1870-1900.....	3,483,109	189.7	410,025	46.9

Within thirty years, then, the number of female servants and waiters has increased about 47 per cent., while the total number of women employed in gainful occupation has almost trebled. The general opinion that our working-women have a dislike for domestic employment, and that this dislike is rapidly growing, has been statistically tested and found correct.

In the subsequent study of the causes of this dislike a further analysis of elements constituting the servant girl's class will prove helpful.

	1890		1900	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Native white.....	541,675	44.5	604,135	47.1
Foreign white.....	374,253	30.8	332,863	25.9
Negro.....	299,473	24.6	345,373	26.9
Others.....	1,238	0.1	1,392	0.1
Total.....	1,216,639	100.0	1,283,763	100.0

The story told by these figures is in many respects surprising. Of course, the large percentage of colored women in the servant class is what from general observation would be expected. But an observer in the eastern states, who can scarcely remember having seen an American-born white girl in the position of a domestic servant, will be surprised to learn that the American-born women make up almost one-half ² of all servants, and, moreover, that their proportional number has considerably increased for the last ten years (44.5 per cent. to 47.1 per cent.), mainly by a gradual reduction in the number of foreign white servants. The assertion, then, that the American-born woman is too independent to go into domestic service lacks statistical support. Nor can it be said that these changes in racial distribution of the servant class are due to effect of preferential demand. For it is a well-known fact that the immigration stations are besieged by our women of the middle classes in quest of foreign help, and that foreign-born servants are supposed to be preferable, because of the greater "ease of managing" them. Women of the middle classes know very well what is meant by this mysteri-

² In a special investigation for the Industrial Commission, by means of special schedules, Miss Gail Laughlin has found the proportion of American-born to be only 23.8 per cent., the proportion of negro women 16.6 per cent., and foreign-born white 59.6 per cent. This aptly illustrates how dangerous and unreliable this method of limited statistical investigation is.

ous phrase. It means longer hours, perhaps lower wages, more work, and, in general, conditions of employment more favorable to the employer.

It is because of these advantages of immigrant domestic help that an exception is made for it in the general agitation against immigration. Thus, even such an authoritative body as the Industrial Commission sees one great objection to the educational test for immigrants. It would keep out the virtuous and industrious Irish girls who come to this country, seeking positions as domestic servants.

If, then, the number of foreign-born servants is rapidly diminishing, it is not because they are discriminated against, but because they discriminate against this mode of making a living. This statement may call forth earnest criticism. It certainly does not represent the popular opinion on the subject.

Says Miss Gail Laughlin:

In other countries social distinctions are more marked than in the United States, and are recognized and accepted. Women coming here from other countries, therefore, are not deterred from entering domestic service because of social stigma, but American-born women accustomed to see other women respected and not regarded by the mass of the people as social inferiors, are not willing to enter an occupation to which social stigma is attached.

On their surface the Census data seem to support this view; for, if numerically the number of American-born servants is larger than the number of foreign-born, yet, as will be seen from the following table, a much larger proportion of the foreign-born white women enter domestic service than of those born on American soil:

	1890			1900		
	Total Women Employed	Servants	Per cent.	Total Women Employed	Servants	Per cent.
Native white	2,179,375	541,675	24.9	3,110,174	604,135	19.4
Foreign white	775,911	374,253	48.2	879,719	332,863	37.9
Negro	1,046,422	299,473	28.6	1,316,840	345,373	26.2

But in the light of a more careful analysis, a conclusion diametrically opposite is derived from the same figures. For the class of foreign white is the only one which shows not only a perceptible proportionate but even a very considerable absolute, decline of servants—almost 42,000 less in 1900 than in 1890. The following conditions are then disclosed by these figures:

A much greater proportion of foreign white women than native-born white women are forced to earn their livelihood. As most means of employment are closed to the foreign-born (even English-speaking) women, almost every second woman is forced to become a servant. Yet, notwithstanding the enormous immigration of the decade 1890-1900, which brought in more than one and a half million women, a great part of whom undoubtedly went into domestic service, the exodus much more than counterbalanced the number of new incomers. The foreign-born white woman evidently enters domestic service out of necessity and not of choice, and is still more anxious to leave it than the native-born white woman.

It is clear, then, how naïve it is to suppose that the foreigner's instinct for social distinction is much less sensitive than that of the American woman. The very rapidity with which she leaves domestic service shows that she feels the low social standing just as acutely. A recent arrival has no acquaintances or friends in this country. For very palpable reasons, therefore, she is willing to waive social considerations for the sake of a comparatively easy living. She is often willing to do things in this country which would be below her level in her own home. But this complacency in regard to the social stigma rapidly vanishes under influence of newly acquired social life.

Nationality	Number of Women Employed	Number of Servants	Percentage of Servants in Total Number of Women Employed
Sweden	81,148	45,794	56.4
Norway	47,934	22,519	47.0
Denmark	15,580	6,867	44.1
Hungary	14,631	6,087	41.6
Austria	25,590	8,909	34.8
Ireland	634,201	195,000	30.8
Switzerland	15,125	4,646	30.7
Germany	538,192	160,939	29.9
Canada, English	102,181	27,521	26.9
Bohemia	25,719	6,316	24.6
Poland	40,816	8,815	22.9
France	21,164	4,719	22.3
Scotland	46,173	9,516	20.6
England and Wales	158,912	28,708	18.1
Russia	40,816	5,853	14.3
Canada, French	78,979	8,092	10.3
Italy	26,093	2,382	9.2
All other nationalities	149,828	24,028	16.0
United States of native parentage (native-born)	1,927,811	350,287	18.2

This is a psychological process very different from the simple

formula, "The foreigners are not so sensitive or particular;" which formula is not entirely without its effect upon the treatment of foreign-born servants.

A glance at the distribution of foreign servants by nationality will be suggestive. (Both foreign-born and native-born of foreign parentage are included.)

It appears, then, that the largest proportion of domestic servants is supplied by nationalities whom no one will accuse of a lack of pride and self-respect. It is not lack of ambition, but strength of character and firmness of purpose, that leads the Swedish, Norwegian, or German girl into this profession—and very soon out of it.

Notwithstanding the enormous increase in the number of women gainfully employed and their penetration into all fields of economic activity, it still remains true that the economic activity of woman is concentrated upon nine or ten lines.

Total women employed in 1900	5,319,397
Agricultural laborers and farmers	970,915
Teachers (including teachers of music)	379,973
Clerks, etc.	245,517
Saleswomen	149,230
Dressmakers, seamstresses, etc.	723,231
Cotton-mill and other textile work	284,220
Servants, waitresses	1,283,763
Housekeepers	149,929
Laundresses	335,282
Nurses and midwives	108,691
Other	688,646

Teacher, clerk, saleswoman, dressmaker, factory operative, laundress, domestic servant, and field hand—that is the downward social scale of the economic activities which utilize more than 87 per cent. of all female work. It would be idle to assert that domestic service alone bears any social stigma, when in reality we have a very elaborate social scale, with people to look up to and look down upon from every step. It is curious to notice that this descending scale from the point of view of social position is, with the exception of the agricultural laborer, an ascending scale, as far as remuneration is concerned, and the full wages of the average city domestic servant are undoubtedly higher than the average school-teacher's salary.

It is very seldom, however, that an actual possibility of choice between all these lines of work is open to the woman looking for employment. Teaching requires special qualifications, and the teaching profession is replenished from a social stratum in which wage-

work or even a position behind a counter is almost as little thought of as domestic service. The negro woman in the cotton-field has no choice but to become a field hand, for the demand for domestic service in the rural districts of the South cannot absorb all the female labor power that is thrown on the market. There is the same lack of choice in a city like Fall River, where there are 17,728 working-women, and the demand for domestic help in a city containing only about 20,000 families can be but slight (the average for the whole country being one servant to ten families). It is not surprising to find that out of these 17,728 women, 14,556 are engaged in manufacturing pursuits (13,200 textile-mill operatives), and only 1,027 domestic servants, and 816 women in trade.

It is only, then, in the few largest cities that a possibility of a choice between trade, industry, and service is open to the wage-working woman. Even there, however, the peculiar conditions of each individual woman's existence force her into this or that line. With a few exceptions, wage-work in the commercial sphere requires knowledge of English, as well as certain qualifications of manner and neatness, scarcely within the reach of the recent immigrant. And in large towns American-born women naturally drift into commerce. It is not a question of choice or inclination, but of opportunity.

Thus we find in New York City, out of a total of 184,857 native-born women in gainful occupations, 18,555 in professional work, or more than 10 per cent., while the foreign-born women had only 3,583 out of 166,425 in the professions, or scarcely more than 2 per cent. In trade and transportation there were 52,090 native-born women, or more than 28 per cent., and only 13,120 foreign-born, or less than 8 per cent. Thus in these two branches of employment there were 38 per cent. of the native-born women, and only 10 per cent. of the foreign-born.

These few illustrations were quoted with the view of establishing the following obvious deductions:

1. Only in large cities is there an opportunity for an actual choice between occupations for women.
2. The real choice is between approximate occupations and not widely distant ones; i. e., the choice has been between factory work and domestic service, and not between professional or even commercial service and domestic service.

3. This and only this kind of choice is open to the foreign-born woman; and it is therefore from the experience of the foreign-born woman that the question of comparative merits of these two paths must be studied.

4. Statistics demonstrated in the foreign-born a considerable preference for manufacture over domestic service, and a constant current from the kitchen to the factory.

The reasons of this dislike for one and preference for the other have been investigated so often that it seems scarcely worth while to analyze the phenomenon. It is the generally accepted theory that the social stigma is the main objection to a profession which in all other respects is far preferable to the factory girl's life. Says Miss Laughlin: "The fact which more than all other facts combined serves to prevent intelligent American women from entering domestic service is that such service carries with it the badge of social inferiority." Yet from her own investigation it follows that, while out of 100 shop workers interviewed, 48, and of 100 factory workers 35, mentioned social stigma as an objection to domestic service, 35 shop workers and 56 factory workers mentioned indefinite hours as a cause; i. e., of 200 women interviewed, 91 mentioned hours, and only 83 the social stigma. And since the opinions of the factory workers are much more important for the understanding of the problem (as was indicated above), it is evident that the question of hours is a much more important one.

The other causes are "the undue restrictions," the excessive demands," etc.; in short, material conditions much more than psychological ones. As Miss Talbot, of the University of Chicago, has very fitly remarked, these material conditions were causes of which social position was the result. With equal truth Miss Laughlin points out that these conditions are themselves results from an underlying cause, which is the basic principle of domestic service, that in domestic service "it is the person who is hired and not distinctly the labor of the person." This brings us a step farther, but still does not bring us far enough. Why these peculiar conditions of wage contract in case of domestic service? And why the social stigma even for the snobbish valets and chambermaids in the wealthy homes, where neither excessive hours nor unreasonable demands are met with?

The insufficiency of the explanation offered results from the lack

of the historical element in these explanations. Both the social stigma and the unfavorable material conditions must be considered in light of historical development, or historical stagnation. The social stigma attached to domestic service is a heritage of the times of domestic servitude, nay domestic slavery. The slave in the field and the slave who had learned a trade or even an art was a slave nevertheless, and no more respected than the domestic slave—possibly less. Yet, with substitution of free labor for chattel slavery, the social stigma attached to work in general has vanished, at least to a considerable extent. If it proved particularly tenacious in the domain of domestic service, it is because only in this domain have the old mediaeval relations of master and servant survived. It is quite a fad with sentimentalists, seeking a solution of the vexing servant-girl problem, to insist that the servant must be made a member of the family, as was the case in the good old times; and our desperate women still advertise for “a servant who would appreciate a good home.” As an old shrewd Irish servant girl (they are all girls, even if seventy years old and grandmothers) told me, she “kept shy” of such advertisements, as “she had found out that the promise of a good home usually meant poor wages.” A glance at our industrial life will convince us that such patriarchal relations between the employer and employee would be a glaring anachronism in any other but the field of domestic service. Long after the craftsman ceased being a slave he was still hired, much as a servant is hired today. Board and room were part of his wages; and a certain control of his actions and morals was part of the master’s privileges or duties. This was before the advent of modern capitalism, when the hired servant could actually expect to become a member of the master’s family. In the twentieth century, however, the employee of the steel factory does not expect to enter the family of the president of the steel trust. In place of the old patriarchal relations, new impersonal relations have arisen. Sentimentalists may bewail the change, yet the change was inevitable nevertheless. It has its drawbacks, but it also has its advantages, and personal liberty of the workingman, at least outside of the factory, is one of the main advantages.

Compare for a moment the conditions of labor contract of the factory employee and the domestic servant. The factory employee knows in the majority of cases what will be expected of him, at least

in the matter of time. The work of the domestic servant depends on the moral qualities of the mistress. She may be a good, indifferent, or very bad employer. The very inquiries of a servant girl as to the nature of services expected are considered evidence of impudence, and, if tolerated, then only out of sheer necessity. "You ask too many questions. I want a girl who will do all she is told to do." What would a factory operative think of a like contract? And if no certainty exists as to the amount of labor that will be exacted from her, even the amount of remuneration promised is no less indefinite. It is true that the wages are usually agreed upon, but the money wages are only one part of the payment, of which the additional elements are room and board. If the servant insists upon decent quarters, if she wants to know in advance what room will be provided for her, it is considered another evidence of impudence. And just picture to yourself what the average mistress would say were the servant to inquire as to the nature of food she is to get! Yet, as food is part of her payment, is she not entitled to know in advance what she is to get for her labor? Some undoubtedly are very liberal in their allowance of food to servants, while others think the leavings from the family's plates are sufficient. And, barring the cases of actual starvation, may not the servant have her individual tastes?

Yet these conditions are considered inevitable, since the servant enters the family of the employer. For the same reasons the employer claims a right of supervision and control over the morals and conduct of the servant. The mistress "cannot have any but a respectable person in her house;" and she is right, of course. But why should the actions of the servant be shaped by the ideas of propriety which are not her own, but her mistress's? That the advantages which the journeyman derived from being a member of the master's family are gone, is evident to everybody. Why should the disadvantages persist? Say what we will about the better wages that the domestic servant commands, it is evident that, to speak in the phraseology of modern economic science, the sum-total of disutilities attaching to this class of work often exceeds the utilities granted, and, as a result, the field does not prove attractive to labor.

Is, then, the condition hopeless, and a solution of the problem impossible, at least so far as satisfaction of both sides be concerned? It is interesting to investigate existing tendencies, if any, which may so work as to produce some kind of equilibrium of demand and

supply in this field of labor—an equilibrium which may be considered a solution of the servant-girl problem.

It was pointed out above that, besides the servant-girl problem, there was also a servant girl's problem. Statistics quoted conclusively show that this latter problem is being solved daily—by women refusing to enter the field of domestic labor and crowding into other fields. From the standpoint of labor, the fewer concerned in the problem, the smaller is the problem. Yet in this solution the interests of the other side are not taken into consideration at all, and, besides, it lacks the sense of completeness in view of the large number of women who remain in the trade.

This radical solution is not the only one possible, however. If the theory developed above be accepted—i. e., that the peculiarities of the servant's position are due to the survival of mediaeval terms of contract—then any efforts to destroy these old structures and equalize the conditions of the servant's wage contract with the conditions of the industrial wage contract, must be considered as progressive, even if they meet with the disapproval of mistresses. Have not all the efforts at improving the industrial wage contract also met with the disapproval of employers? Yet who denies today the progressive nature of these changes?

The efforts of the servants to improve the condition of wage contract are many and persistent, and they are worthy of admiration if it be but remembered that, by a process of natural selection, the women of more independent spirit are not in domestic service, and, furthermore, that these efforts have not had any legal assistance, and that no permanent general unions have been formed to unite and harmonize individual effort.

One important aim was the achievement of a more definite contract in regard to hours of labor. There is the persistent effort to equalize domestic work with other branches of wage-work in the matter of the evening rest. In Russia, e. g., all the time of the servant, literally, is at the disposal of the master, and the educated lady coming home from a spirited meeting in defense of rights of labor thinks nothing of waking her chambermaid, to get ready the samovar, at two o'clock in the morning. In Russia each hour off is granted as a favor. In this country the meek request for one evening off during the week is but a slight improvement over these barbarous conditions. But the evening rest, the stopping of work after the evening dish-washing, is here more or less the rule. With

the work during evening hours eliminated, it is an easy step toward full liberty of motion and action during evening hours.

No logical arguments against limiting the working-hours of servants by law could be mentioned, except the inconvenience to the employer. This argument, however, does not seem to possess any greater strength in the field of domestic service than in the field of industrial service. But such legislative regulation will never come before the group of wage-workers has shown its power to establish a limited working-day, at least in some cases.

A revolution—quiet and scarcely perceptible, but a revolution—was accomplished in the domain of domestic service by this limitation of hours of labor. Another revolution, no less important, is proceeding quietly at present in the destruction of the strongest mediaeval bond—the rooming of the servant girl in the employer's house. To one who is used to this custom it seems necessary "in the very nature of things." But the nature of things is constantly undergoing changes. Southern ladies will possibly be shocked at the suggestion that the unreliable colored servant girls are working for the progress of society. Yet, in the light of the premises accepted, the colored servant's dislike to live in the house of the employer (and perhaps the employer's dislike to have her live there) are progressive forces; for with the destruction of this old custom the strongest impetus is given to a normal regulation of the hours of labor; and the strongest foundation of the master's despotism, which extends over and beyond the working-hours, is destroyed thereby. It is the lack of this despotism during leisure hours that puts the hotel employee on a higher level than the private domestic servant, though both may do identical work. Abolition of this despotism will be an important factor in equalization of the standing of domestic and industrial workers. While these are actual tendencies of daily observation, another step into the same direction may be predicted—the stoppage of all payment in kind, not excluding food.

Nothing except custom can be claimed in favor of the existing plan. We are used to having the servant eat in our kitchen, and we think this natural and necessary. But industrial countries used to have, and less advanced countries still have, the custom of partial payment "in kind" for industrial wage-workers.

That the servant girl assists in the preparation of meals is no reason for her accepting meals in partial payment; the privilege of

unlimited smoking or drinking for the tobacco factory or distillery hand, or partial payment in shoes for a shoe-factory operative, is no longer customary. Like the industrial worker, the domestic servant may require payment for her labor in units of universal value—money, with the privilege of spending it according to her own taste. Nor has the argument of comparative cheapness of the partial payment in kind any virtue of novelty. The industrial worker in the backward countries still receives part of his wages in food. And the same argument of cheapness could be made for the company store.

The discontinuance of the old habit of paying the servant in kind will finally abolish the strongest manifestation of the social inferiority of the servant—the partaking of the meal by the servant in the kitchen, separately from the family; and in no other way can the same object be accomplished, as the objection to placing a total stranger at the family table—a stranger possibly little cultured and ill-mannered—is a perfectly legitimate one. If the servant have regular hours for employment, and be permitted to leave at a definite hour in the evening for her home—in short, if domestic service be possible for a woman without relinquishing her own home—the matter of food will not present any more difficulties for the domestic than for the industrial worker, and the material factors which make a pariah of the servant will have been destroyed to a great extent.

It is felt that this solution of the problem may not prove attractive to many employers. However, no remedial scheme is here proposed. Only tendencies which actually exist in our everyday life have been indicated. And they have been given what is thought to be their right interpretation. They will not make domestic service an occupation attractive to college graduates, as some reformers hope, but will make it a fit field of activity for self-respecting women and girls.

It must be acknowledged that the forms which domestic service is acquiring, and will acquire at a much more rapid rate, are very uncomfortable for the average employer. This means that the management of the home, as it exists today, requires a considerable amount of labor, which is often more than one woman can or ought to do. The result is overwork and confinement for the majority of our women. It is, of course, no remedy at all to point out that the vast majority of our households (nine-tenths of them) even now get

along without paid assistance, for the chronic overwork of these nine-tenths of the women is a matter of common observation. Of course, women of the middle classes have no social claim for a better fate. Yet, in so far as domestic slavery has helped them to shift the burden upon other shoulders for many years and inasmuch as this burden shows the tendency to revert to their own shoulders, mainly because of the new tendencies in domestic service, their complaints may easily be explained, if not justified.

The real fault lies evidently not with the servants, but with the organization of home life. It was pointed out in an earlier paragraph that the conditions of mediaeval labor contract have survived in domestic service much longer than in industrial work. This has been caused by the much slower application of modern science and technics to the field of domestic work.

The saving of time and labor because of better methods and implements has been much less in domestic work than in industrial work. But why this remarkable difference? Is it because of the exceptional difficulties that the technical problems of domestic work present? Surely the process of food preparation does not surpass in complexity the varied processes of mechanical industry. A plentiful supply of cheap labor has always been and still is the greatest obstacle to technical progress, and as long as there was no application for woman's work outside of the home, there evidently was a great supply of female energy to perform the tedious tasks of housework, and inventive genius has kept out of this field.

But the progress of industry, commerce, and transportation is changing all that. Many varied fields of industrial employment are opening to women and housework becomes more and more distasteful—the more cultured the woman, the more distasteful. It is this discrepancy between the low technical standards of house-work and the demands of women for more leisure and for more congenial work that is the real cause of complaints against the servant girl. Evidently the cause (and the remedy) lies not so much with the servant girl as with the organization of the home.

An extensive discussion of the evolution of home life would lead beyond the scope of this brief study. But the most salient features may here be indicated. The most important of these is the widespread feeling that the old organization of home life has become unsatisfactory. To prove it it is only necessary to point out to the

rapidly growing extension of boarding-house and family-hotel life. What proportion of American families have given up their homes for the cheerless existence in a boarding-house or hotel it is impossible to state with precision, but the rapid growth in the number of these establishments may be taken as a measure :

	1870	1880	1890	1900
Boarding-house keepers.....	12,785	19,058	44,349	71,281
Hotel-keepers.....	26,394	32,453	44,076	54,797
Restaurant-keepers.....	6,600*	10,800*	19,283	33,844
Total.....	45,779	62,311	107,708	159,922

* Approximately calculated.

The number of persons employed in these various substitutes for a home has increased three and a half times, while population has hardly doubled; and the number of boarding-houses has increased almost six-fold. The restaurants show the same rate of increase. If the vast number of small private boarding-houses is taken into consideration, where keeping boarders is only a subsidiary occupation, the conclusion forces itself upon one that the number of Americans living in boarding-houses must be counted by hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions. And it is not a matter of speculation, but of actual investigation and observation, that the difficulties of home management, and pre-eminently the servant-girl problem, force many into boarding houses. In a country like Russia, where servants may be hired for three dollars a month, to remain on duty twenty-four hours a day, boarding-houses are scarcely known.

The boarding-house is not indicated as an ideal of the future American home; but if a rapidly growing part of the population finds the boarding-house preferable to the home, this is sufficient evidence that the burden of housekeeping is becoming too heavy to compensate for the possession of a home. When technical knowledge and invention shall have changed conditions to such an extent that it will be possible to combine domestic work with normal human existence, then the problem will be solved—the problem of domestic service for those who can afford to employ such, and for the domestic wage-worker, the much broader problem of health and happiness for the ten times more numerous women who are forced to be their own and their families' domestic servants.

And the signs of such progress are not missing. Witness, for example, gas stoves, steam heat, hot-water supply, breakfast foods, and canned soups. The genius who shall invent an automatic dish-washer and pot-scrubber will be a true benefactor of mankind.

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